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AUTHOR Funk, Fanchon F.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

An example of a comprehensive mechanism for obtaining specific evaluative data related to teacher education programs is presented. This Supervising Teacher's Program Evaluation Form was devised to gather data from cooperating teachers in three areas: (1) the adequacy of the student teacher's training; (2) the adequacy of the university supervisor's supervision of student teachers; and (3) the adequacy of the Florida State University's Office of Field Experiences in the duties of supervision, cooperation, and communication with supervising teachers. While the questionnaire is being used to assess the effectiveness of Florida State University's teacher education program, investigators recognize a margin for error in interpreting responses. The form calls for ratings of excellent, good, fair, and poor. The supervising teachers appeared to rate almost all of the student teachers highly, and it is recognized that supervising teachers are inclined to overestimate or make leniency errors when they are familiar with those whom they are rating. Therefore, in analyzing the responses to these forms, it is assumed by the investigators that a rating of "good" implies that there is room for improvement. The Office of Field Experiences, using this assumption, has observed areas of weakness in the teacher training program and has recommended measures for improvement. In examining the ratings of the university supervisors and their own office, the investigators, using the same allowance for error, have proposed changes for ameliorating weaknesses in the various teacher education departments. (JD)

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THE INFLUENCE OF FEEDBACK FROM SUPERVISING TEACHERS ON A STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM

Dr. Fanchon F. Funk
Dr. Jeffrey L. Hoffman
Mrs. Anne M. Keithley
Mr. Bruce E. Long

The authors are members of the College of Education, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

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THE INFLUENCE OF FEEDBACK FROM SUPERVISING TEACHERS ON A STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM

The student teaching component of teacher education programs is perceived by students as the single most productive experience over the two to three year professional educational program (Flint, 1965; Roberts & Blandership, 1970; Propkop, 1971; Seperson & Joyce, 1971; Henry and Beasley, 1977). Also, it is generally agreed that the key to the value of the experience is the classroom supervising teacher. The usual evaluation instruments completed by supervising teachers in evaluating student teacher performance have not provided those kind of data considered useful for improving teacher education programs. There is a lack of data concerning the effectiveness of services from the teaching specialization department faculty and of the relationship between the Office of Field Experiences and supervising teachers. Therefore, the Supervising Teacher's Program Evaluation Form was devised to gather data in three areas: (1) supervising teacher's ratings of the adequacy of the student teacher's training; (2) the adequacy of the specialty department's supervision of student teachers; and (3) the adequacy of the Office of Field Experiences supervision, cooperation and communication with supervising teachers.

The Supervising Teacher's Program Evaluation Form was devised after reviewing such instruments as the Purdue Student Teaching Opinionnaire, the Michigan State Student Teaching Instructional Rating Form, the University of Iowa Criteria for Evaluation Form, and the Student Teacher Performance Checklist from the University of California at Sacramento. After the preliminary form was field tested with 151 supervising teachers, it was revised to its present form.

This final revision of the questionnaire provides a means for recording information on an official form in an efficient and uniform manner. This form makes for easy compiling of a large amount of information on a regular basis. Keeping the format simple, attractive and easy to use allows for speedy completion and thus fosters a consistently high rate of return. Further, by asking for anonymous responses credibility and candidness are increased. As can be seen by the "free response section" printed on the reverse side of the instrument, a portion of the form is open ended.

[Insert Instrument]

Three years of data revealed in this article were gathered from the 42 "clozed" test items to which some 570 supervising teachers responded. These teachers were engaged in the Florida State University teacher education program throughout the State of Florida. Since all teachers did not respond to all items the numbers differ from item to item.

Table 1 reveals the percentage of teachers who rated their student teachers as excellent or good in particular teaching skills and knowledge. The ratings were most generous.

[Insert Table 1]

As can be seen in Table 1, the findings are somewhat contradictory. The supervising teachers rated 93% of the student teachers excellent or good in rapport with pupils, but only 74% of them rated the student teachers as excellent or good in class control. Although 91% of the supervising teachers rated the student teachers as excellent or good in overall effectiveness, only 82% rated them good or excellent in planning skills.

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
ASSOCIATE TEACHING PROGRAM
OFFICE OF FIELD EXPERIENCES

SUBJECT/GRADE LEVEL _____
COUNTY _____

SUPERVISING TEACHER'S PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM

This questionnaire is designed to help the Florida State University Office of Field Experiences evaluate its Associate Teaching Program. Your response to each of the following items will help us to evaluate our overall effectiveness and to make changes to better serve our Associate Teachers and the schools in which they will be placed.

Quarter (F) (W) (SP) (SU) 19___

E - Excellent
G - Good
F - Fair
P - Poor
NA - Not applicable

Use a soft lead pencil to respond to each item according to the key above.

		E	G	F	P	NA
I.	Please rate your Associate Teacher on the overall adequacy of training brought to the field experienc.					
1.	Knowledge of content	1. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
2.	Planning skills	2. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
3.	Teaching methods/strategies	3. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
4.	Class control	4. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
5.	Evaluation of student progress	5. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
6.	Accepting and implementing constructive suggestions	6. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
7.	Overall teaching effectiveness as judged by the achievement of pupils taught	7. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
8.	Rapport with pupils	8. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
9.	Interaction with other teachers and administrators	9. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
10.	Ability to work effectively with parents	10. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
11.	Overall adequacy of preparation for Associate Teaching	11. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
II.	Please rate the SUPERVISION provided by the TEACHING SPECIALIZATION DEPARTMENT FACULTY from Florida State University (e.g., English Ed., Math Ed., Home Ec. Ed., Art Ed., etc.) on the following:					
12.	Amount of time devoted to observing the Associate Teacher teach	12. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
13.	Usefulness of the department supervisor's evaluations of the Associate Teacher	13. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
14.	Usefulness of suggestions provided by the department supervisor to me	14. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
15.	Openness of the department supervisor to discuss any real problems with me	15. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
16.	Special assistance provided by the department supervisor when requested	16. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
17.	Cooperation and compatability between the department supervisor and me	17. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
18.	Overall quality of supervision provided	18. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
19.	The department supervisor's visit would be most helpful to the Associate Teacher during weeks: (A) 1-2 (B) 3-4 (C) 5-6 (D) 7-8 (E) 9-10	19. (A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
20.	The department supervisor's visit would be most helpful to me during weeks: (A) 1-2 (B) 3-4 (C) 5-6 (D) 7-8 (E) 9-10	20. (A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
III.	Please rate THE OFFICE OF FIELD EXPERIENCES AND THE AREA COORDINATOR on the following:					
21.	Information provided in the ASSOCIATE TEACHING APPLICATION	21. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
22.	Information provided in the handbook, PROGRAM FOR ASSOCIATE TEACHING	22. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
23.	Assistance provided by the Coordinator during Associate Teaching (if requested)	23. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
24.	Evidence, through verbal or written communication and/or personal visitation, of the Coordinator's interest in helping me	24. (E)	(G)	(F)	(P)	(NA)
25.	Number of students or Associate Teachers you have supervised from any institution (A) 0 (B) 1 (C) 2 (D) 3 (E) 4 or more	25. (A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
26.	How many were from FSU (A) 0 (B) 1 (C) 2 (D) 3 (E) 4 or more	26. (A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
27.	Have you taken or are you taking the FSU course: "Supervision of Associate Teaching"? (A) YES (B) NO	27. (A) YES		(B) NO		

IV. Optional Items:

28. ○○○○○ 29. ○○○○○ 30. ○○○○○ 31. ○○○○○ 32. ○○○○○

33. ○○○○○ 34. ○○○○○ 35. ○○○○○ 36. ○○○○○ 37. ○○○○○

38. ○○○○○ 39. ○○○○○ 40. ○○○○○ 41. ○○○○○ 42. ○○○○○

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See Reverse Side For Free Response

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FREE RESPONSE SECTION

Please identify specific strengths as well as areas for improvement in the professional preparation of our Associate Teachers.

I. COMMENTS REGARDING FSU'S TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A. Strengths: _____

B. Areas for Improvement: _____

II. COMMENTS REGARDING SUPERVISION BY TEACHING SPECIALIZATION DEPARTMENT FACULTY FROM THE UNIVERSITY (e.g. Foreign Language Ed., Music Ed., Social Work Ed., Physical Ed., Library Science Ed., Visual Disabilities Ed., etc.) _____

III. GENERAL COMMENTS _____

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Table 1

Associate Teacher Ratings by Classroom Supervising Teachers

Item #	Adequacy of Training Skill	N	% E or G
1	Knowledge of Content	564	90
2	Planning Skills	559	82
3	Teaching Methods	558	84
4	Class Control	559	74
5	Evaluation of Students	560	87
6	Accepts Suggestions	558	92
7	Overall Effectiveness	558	91
8	Rapport with Pupils	558	93
9	Rapport with Teachers	558	93
10	Work with Parents	318	92
11	Overall Preparation	560	87

While the data imply that the supervising teachers are, in general, well pleased with the student teachers, such an interpretation is open to error. It has long been recognized that raters tend to overestimate or make a leniency error (Guilford, 1954) when they are familiar with those whom they are rating. When a scale employs only four descriptive choices such as excellent, good, fair, poor, the room for this error in rating is even greater. For example, statistically it does not appear likely that less than ten percent of the student teachers would be "average" or "below average" in the areas rated.

It appears the investigators should have considered a rating of good as being more toward "average." Thus, any area that tended to be rated as good might be in need of improvement. Table 2 reveals some dramatic examples of these shifts in ratings that occur by regrouping the categories of response. The per item effect of these changes can be seen when comparing Table 2 with Table 1.

[Insert Table 2]

To strengthen the weaker areas, the Office of Field Experience has taken the following measures:

I. Teaching Techniques

A. More diverse and earlier field-based clinical experiences.

B. More mini-experiences in varying educational settings (e.g. open and self-contained; urban and rural; middle/junior high and senior high; primary/elementary and intermediate levels).

C. More comprehensive screening in the communication and computational skills.

Table 2

Percentage of Teachers' Ratings of Good or Below Good in Selected Areas

Item #	Skill or Quality	Total N	% G, F, or P
2	Planning Skills	559	56
3	Teaching Methods	558	60
4	Class Control	559	73
5	Evaluation of Students	560	56
7	Overall Effectiveness	558	52

II. Class Control Techniques

A. Evaluation and, if needed, improvement on the application of theoretical approaches to classroom management.

B. Specific observation and evaluation of students to determine their ability to work with students having special needs.

C. Increased use of both mini-class and large group control sessions followed by supervisory counseling.

III. Planning Skills

A. Special training in the preparation of student Individual Educational Plans (IEP).

B. Portfolio documentation of each teacher candidate's lesson plans.

C. More emphasis on the advantages of short and long-range planning.

The ratings of the university supervisors were not as high as those given to student teachers. Again, keeping in mind the tendency to rate others above what their true ratings should be, as Table 1 reveals, only 55% of the supervising teachers rated the university supervisors as excellent or good in the amount of time spent observing student teachers and their evaluation of the overall supervision by university personnel was not impressive. It seems that the supervising teachers were more favorably impressed by the student teachers than they were by the university supervisors. This might well be expected for, as Table 3 reveals, the majority of the supervising teachers spent little time with university supervisory personnel. It appears from these data that supervising teacher-university personnel conferences were held at the convenience of the university personnel and not according to the needs of the supervising teacher or the student teacher.

Table 3 displays the ratings for these items in the two ways previously discussed for emphasizing certain areas seen as needing improvement.

[Insert Table 3]

The results of the supervising teacher-university personnel section of the questionnaire were somewhat disconcerting. In order to ameliorate some of the revealed weaknesses the following suggestions for inservice actions were made to the various teacher education departments:

I. Improvement of University Supervision
   A. Orientation and counseling time should be increased for new faculty supervisors.
   B. The Office of Field Experiences could schedule additional visitation times after departmental supervisors conferences with supervising teachers (for offering another opinion).
   C. Staff development workshops could be required of some university personnel to improve their leadership, public relations, and listening skills.

II. More Effective Use of Observation Time
   A. Written reports of visitations could be required with copies distributed to the student teacher, supervising teacher, the departmental file, and the Office of Field Experiences.
   B. Conferences could be held to aid university personnel to more objectively determine the strengths and weaknesses of student teachers.
   C. Rating sheets for evaluating student teachers may be revised using suggestions from classroom teachers.

Table 3

Supervision by University Departments as Rated

by Classroom Supervising Teachers

Item #	Question	N	% E or G	%G,F,or P
12	Time Observing	538	55	78
13	Quality of Evaluations	538	75	58
14	Suggestions to Teacher	540	75	52
15	Openness	539	86	36
16	Special Assistance	273	89	22
17	Cooperation	538	87	40
18	Overall Supervision	521	71	59
19	Visit Associate Teacher in Weeks:			
	1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10			
	(N = 464) 4% 34 48 13 1			
20	Visit Teacher Weeks:			
	1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10			
	(N = 473) 12% 34 40 12 1			

Table 4

Ratings of the Office and Coordinators by

Classroom Supervising Teachers

Item #	Forms/Activities	N	% E or G	%G, F, or P
21	Application Form	556	97	33
22	Handbook Information	561	97	29
23	Coordinator Assistance	345	98	14
24	Coordinator Interest	558	95	25

III. Improvement of Written Reports

A. Each department be encouraged to develop their own evaluation to more specifically reflect the expectation of that discipline.

[Insert Table 4]

The Office of Field Experiences probably received higher ratings than it should have. As disclosed in Table 4, it was rated excellent or good by nearly all of the respondents. In fact the ratings were so good they offered little help in diagnosing weaknesses. Thus, that section of the questionnaire is being revised. Efforts are underway to extend this part of the questionnaire in asking for more specific responses by posing new questions in the current section entitled optional items. The first step in this renewal process of having individual interviews with a sample of supervising teachers is now being undertaken.

It has been the intent of the writers to provide an example of a comprehensive mechanism for obtaining specific evaluative data related to teacher education programs. One outcome of the use of this instrument has been the candid reporting by classroom supervising teachers of their perceptions of areas of strengths and weaknesses in teacher education programs. Feedback from instruments such as this can aid teacher educators both in program development and in choosing what directions are best for the future.

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